

6/11/78
race war

"yeah," he said, "guys at work are buying guns and shit ... storing 'em in the desert for the big race war."

immediately i begin to regret the many times i refused to go hunting with my father, never acquiring the taste for blood and guts, the violent scattering of feathers in mid-air, or the nonsensical pumping of shells into a ball of fur.

taking a sip from my wine cooler, i study him ... an aryan bull. i imagine him and myself locked in hand-to-hand combat, a classic battle. but i know that's not how it will be, cause a scared man is a crazy one.

it will come from behind, and i won't even know what hit me.

6/24/78
the death of Billy the Kid
(viejo's version)

"i know, cuz my great-grandfather had an indian friend who had to go inside an' see if it was really the Kid. that crazy gringo Garrett just stuck his guns inside an open window, closed his eyes, and emptied every fuckin' bullet he had into the lumpy sheets.

then he went around the corner of the building an' threw up."

8/22/78
dying; a vision

i am sitting at the bar inside a dark tavern. it is raining outside, and the only thing i have in common with this strange land

is an appreciation for a cold beer on a wet day.
the bartender is at the far end of the bar
talking with a group of men in a language
i don't understand. they look at me and begin
to laugh.

pretending not to notice, i gesture with my
empty bottle. the bartender ignores me.

"i'd like another beer, please."

still no response.

(in singapore i had encountered the same problem,
only to find out that i could handle five men at
the same time and still walk away in less than
three pieces.)

i throw the bottle, smashing the mirror behind the bar,
saying "fuck you" in a language everyone understands.
then, making a quick head count, i remember the time
i had my fortune told by a moustached woman who had
gold teeth. "twelve," she had said, "is your unlucky
number."

as two of the men block off the door,
the rest engage in the familiar shattering of glass,
letting me know what to expect;
they surround me, the jagged edges of beer bottles
like the teeth of so many pirahnas.

9/10/78

what does it mean?

the girl on stage had the face of a young
mayan princess, the body of a playboy centerfold.
tugging at her black bikini bottoms,
she smiled at me.
and if i'd had it to bargain with, my soul would
have been hers.

which brings to mind my 8th grade english teacher
and the time she kept me after class to discuss
something i had written. she paced back and forth
in front of my desk, looking like a conviction-
crazed prosecutor warming up for the kill.
she waved my composition in front of my face
like it was a piece of prized evidence.
"this bit about looking up the girl's dress
in your math class ... what does it mean?"

she had caught me by surprise, and i just sat there
like a startled jackrabbit, blinded by a pair of
approaching headlights.